

Board of Adjustment

Staff Report

CASE NUMBER: BA16-059 (PLN2016-00661)
LOCATION/ADDRESS: 6402 East Superstition Springs Blvd.
COUNCIL DISTRICT: 6
PLANNER: Gordon Sheffield, AICP CNUa, Zoning Administrator
OWNER: Tierra Partners VII, LLC
APPLICANT: Joshua Meyer

REQUEST: *Requesting a Special Use Permit (SUP) for a Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP) in the LC-PAD zoning district.*

SUMMARY OF APPLICANT'S REQUEST

This case involves a modification of the comprehensive sign plan approved for the Superstition Springs Business Park, which extends along the north side of Superstition Springs Blvd. from the Superstition Freeway (US Highway 60) east to Power Rd. In particular, the request is to allow a fifth attached sign on the office building that is located on the far west end of the business park development site.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of case BA16-028, conditioned upon the following:

- 1. Compliance with the sign plan submitted, except as modified by the conditions listed below.*
- 2. Any additional signage not identified with this Sign Plan will require modification to this Special Use Permit.*
- 3. Compliance with all requirements of the Development Services Division with regard to the issuance of sign permits.*

SITE CONTEXT

CASE SITE: Existing office building – zoned LC-PAD
NORTH: Existing hotel - zoned LC-BIZ-PAD
EAST: Existing restaurant - Zoned LC-BIZ
SOUTH: (across Superstition Springs Blvd) Proposed car dealership, presently vacant - zoned LI-PAD-PAD
WEST: (across Superstition Springs Blvd) Existing car dealership, zoned LI-PAD-PAD

STAFF ANALYSIS

The applicant is requesting modification of a Special Use Permit (SUP) for an existing Comprehensive Sign Plan (CSP).

When the sign plan was adopted in 1997, the project was still conceptual, and did not yet have confirmed details of the buildings that would be constructed. The basic concept of a hotel, an office building, and several retail and restaurant pads had been planned, and specific details of the hotel building had been approved, but the details of the office building had yet to be worked out. Because the hotel was ready for construction, the developer opted to file a CSP request believing the office construction would eventually take place. The narrative for the CSP anticipated that revisions may be needed in the future, noting: "Modifications to this CSP may be made in accordance with procedure established by the City of Mesa Sign Ordinance."

At present, the number of attached signs for the building is limited to a maximum of 4, "unless a designated sign band has been established." While the design of the building does not provide a specific

‘sign band’, the building does provide several potential designated locations for attached signs. Given the bend in the building as it follows the curve the adjacent street, the addition of a fifth sign placed on the building on an elevation otherwise devoid of signage will not add to any sense of sign clutter. The size of the fifth attached sign (maximum of 64-sqft) is consistent with the other attached signs for the building (3 are also 64-sqft maximums), and proportionate to the building elevation on which it would be placed without overwhelming the building’s architecture.

FINDINGS

1. The CSP establishes consistent detached sign design, size and height that is proportionate to the building size of the each of the individual buildings for this project.
2. The existing CSP dates back to 1997, when much of the development now on the site was still in a speculative or conceptual stage. The CSP adopted at the time anticipated changes, and made specific allowance for revisions to be made in the future.
3. The proposed 5th attached sign is consistent in area (4-ft by 16-ft, or 64-sqft) with the other four attached signs already in place (3 locations are also 4-ft by 16-ft, and one is 2.5-ft by 7-ft). Aggregate sign area for the building would increase from 210- to 274-sqft, and no one single sign being larger than 64-sqft.
4. The office building that is the subject of this request is a two story structure and is designed with a slight bend in the middle that would take an otherwise rectangular building and allow it to ‘follow’ the curve in Superstition Springs Blvd. As such, there is a south elevation and a southwest elevation. Only the east, west, north and south elevations have signs at this time. These are no signs on the southwest elevation. Therefore, the addition of a fifth sign facing the street will not add to any sense of sign clutter on the building.
5. The office building is multi-tenant. The addition of the fifth sign will allow an additional tenant to identify its location.
6. Given that each of the tenant spaces within this multi-tenant building has internal access, then each suite does not qualify as having a ‘by-right’ attached sign allowance, which is limited to suites that qualify as having separate occupancies, each typically having separate outdoor access.
7. Unique conditions of orientation of the office building, building size, and sign placement exist with this project, which justify the additional number of signs in excess of the typical maximum of three.

ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS

Zoning Ordinance, Section 11-19-5 – Definition of Terms:

SPECIAL USE PERMIT (S.U.P.): A discretionary authorization issued by the Zoning Administrator/Board of Adjustment only upon finding, through a public hearing, that the proposed activity permitted by such Special Use Permit is in conformance with the intent of this Code, the General Plan and/or other specified plans or Council policies; and will be compatible with, and not detrimental to, adjacent properties or the neighborhood in general; and may be limited by specific conditions, restrictions, terms or time periods.

Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 11-41-6 – Signs Permitted By Zoning District:

(E) NC, LC, GC, PEP, LI, GI, HI and PS Districts

1. Attached Signs:

- (a) Occupancies with less than one hundred (100) front feet: Two (2) signs for each occupancy not to exceed two (2) square feet of total sign area for each front foot of building occupancy.

- (b) Occupancies with more than one hundred (100) front feet: Three (3) signs for each occupancy not to exceed two (2) square feet of total sign area for each front foot of building occupancy.
- (c) Total attached signage shall not exceed one hundred sixty (160) square feet per occupancy.
- (d) Attached signage shall not extend horizontally a distance greater than fifty percent (50%) of the width of the building wall on which it is displayed, except for buildings containing multiple occupancies.
- (e) Each occupancy shall be permitted at least twenty-four (24) square feet of attached signage.
- (f) Occupancies having no exterior wall parallel to a fronting street shall be permitted signage based on two (2) square feet of sign area for each lineal foot of exterior wall of the front of such occupancy.
- (g) Occupancies having an exterior building wall parallel to more than one fronting street shall be permitted signage based on the longer parallel wall. Signage placed on the shorter parallel exterior wall shall not exceed two (2) square feet of area per front foot of building occupancy of such shorter parallel wall, and this area shall be subtracted from the total allowable sign area.
- (h) Attached signage shall be located on the specific occupancy identified therein and is not transferable from one occupancy to another.

Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 11-41-8 (D) – Supplemental Provisions:

13. A Comprehensive Sign Plan for a proposed or existing development/building may be approved by the Zoning Administrator/Board of Adjustment in conjunction with the granting of a Special Use Permit under Title 11, Administration and Procedures Chapter of the Mesa City Code. The purpose of a Comprehensive Sign Plan is to provide for the establishment of signage criteria that are tailored to a specific development or location, and which may vary from specific Ordinance provisions. The intent is to provide for flexible sign criteria that promote superior design through architectural integration of the site, buildings and signs.

A Comprehensive Sign Plan shall include the location, size, height, construction material, color, type of illumination and orientation of all proposed signs, either permanent or temporary.

A Comprehensive Sign Plan containing elements which exceed the permitted height, area and number of signs specified in this Chapter may be approved by the Zoning Administrator/Board of Adjustment only upon a finding that:

- (a) The development site contains unique or unusual physical conditions, such as topography, proportion, size or relation to a public street that would limit or restrict normal sign visibility; or
- (b) The proposed or existing development exhibits unique characteristics of land use, architectural style, site location, physical scale, historical interest or other distinguishing features that represent a clear variation from conventional development; or
- (c) The proposed signage incorporates special design features such as logos, emblems, murals or statuary that are integrated with the building architecture.

The construction and placement of individual signs contained in the approved Comprehensive Sign Plan shall be subject to the issuance of sign permits in accordance with 11-41-8 (E).